

UNICEF Moldova

TERMS OF REFERENCE

National Individual Consultancy

Human Resource and Training Needs Assessment in social work in Republic of Moldova

Duration: September 2014 – May 2015 (estimated at 21 working days)

Location: Chisinau

1. Background

The new Law Nr. 140 on special protection of children at risk and those separated from their parents (in force since 1 January 2014), the Government decision on the inter-sectorial referral mechanism and the national Child Protection Strategy 2014-2020 all recognize the need for an adequate child protection system to prevent and protect children from abuse, exploitation and violence, from institutionalization and, increasingly, from coming into conflict with the law.

Violence against children is widespread, with recent figures showing that over 75 per cent of children aged 2-14 years old in Moldova experience violent discipline (MICS 2012). The rate of children in institutions has been steadily decreasing, from 12,000 in 2006 to 4,000 in 2013, but it is at risk of reaching a plateau. Crime rate among adolescents is on the rise, while the focus on prevention and diversion of children from the justice system is increasing. The number of children left behind by migrant parents is also staggeringly high at 20 per cent in the age group 2-14 years old.

While laws and policies are being put in place to set the basis for a solid child protection system, lot remains to be done. Besides tackling the social norm of acceptance of violence in the upbringing of children, the Government will need to invest, together with civil society partners, in strong social workers, awareness among teachers, nurses and doctors to recognize abuse, referral mechanisms to provide timely and adequate support to the child and her/his family and professional services at the community, including counselling, therapy and parenting classes.

When analysing the bottlenecks to a functioning child protection system, the lack of (quality) social work comes out as a major issue. Social work is one the most important tools to protect children from abuse, exploitation and neglect and ensure timely and adequate support and referral to them and their families. However, social work covers a much broader spectrum than child protection and the demand on the 'profession' is increasing: inequities are on the rise, the population of Moldova is ageing fast, and a reform to deinstitutionalize adults and children with disabilities for a more inclusive society is underway. Since the late 1990s social work has been recognized as a profession in Moldova and introduced as a subject at university level, however many challenges remain. To name but a few: (1) the profession is not yet 'protected', which means that anyone can be recruited to perform social work and in reality those that graduate from university are not the ones carrying out the functions. In reality at community level the jobs are performed by agronomists, teachers and others; (2) Turnover rates are very high, hence even if 'unprofessional' social workers receive training, the chance

that they leave within a year is high; (3) The understanding of social work in the country, among public and other professionals is limited, and the meaning of “social worker,” and related terms such as social work specialist, and social assistants, as defined by legislation and practice, is confusing. Most social workers are employed in public social services in jobs that emphasize the administration of social assistance benefits over psychosocial services. One of the most consistent and pervasive issues of social work in Moldova is low remuneration for social workers and difficult working conditions (large caseloads, excessive paper work, and limited resources for clients).

Since the dissolution of the former Soviet Union in 1991, the former republics of the Union have launched reforms in social assistance programmes, adjusting them to the requirements of the market economy. These reforms have been especially painful and slow in the Republic of Moldova, and after more than 20 years, social assistance in Moldova is still inadequate. Widespread poverty and inequity are increasing the demand for social assistance (SA), while fiscal constraints and limited administrative capacities are hindering reforms (Braithwaite, Grootaert, & Milanovich, 2000; Dobronogov, 2003; EBRD, 2003; Fox, 2003; World Bank, 2000a, 2004).

According to the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) and International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), the social work profession “promotes social change, problem solving in human relationships and the empowerment and liberation of people to enhance their well-being. Utilizing theories of human behaviour and social systems, social work intervenes at the points where people interact with their environments. Principles of human rights and social justice are fundamental to social work.”¹

As such, social workers are a key component of modern social service provision. Among other things, they provide counselling, assist individuals in accessing social services and other benefits, lobby for the disenfranchised, and engage in actions designed to influence social policies. Building the social work profession is a complex undertaking that involves creating legislation and education programmes, developing and strengthening curricula, helping to nurture professional associations for social workers, developing licensing and practice standards, and raising awareness about the need for social workers, among other things.

Considering the above-mentioned, the human resource and training needs assessment of social work will need to start with: (1) a definition of social work according to international standards and good practice, adapted to the Moldovan context through an analysis of statistical data, trends and information on the number and kind of vulnerable groups in Moldova. With the working definition in hand (2) the legal and policy framework can be reviewed to assess the ‘theoretic’ demands on the profession, from all angles, not only child protection. As a next step a study methodology will be developed to (3) assess social work practice, based on the field work. After data collection and analysis, human resources and training needs will be assessed and clear recommendations will be made to inform the social protection and child protection system reform (including the revision/development of job descriptions), as well as on further training needs of social workers and existing gaps in current system, in accordance with international guidelines on social work and practical needs of the country.

¹ <http://www.sagepub.com/jimenezstudy/articles/Hare.pdf>

The assessment will be carried out jointly by:

An **international individual consultant** who will:

- Provide a definition of social work according to international standards and good practice based also on an analysis of statistical data, trends and information on the number and kind of vulnerable groups in Moldova;
- Support and guide a national consultant in a legal and policy analysis of social work functions based on the agreed definition of and needs for social work;
- Provide technical assistance to a national institution hired to conduct the assessment of practice of social work in Moldova, including methodology, tools, field work, data processing and analysis;
- Be responsible for the final assessment and recommendations

Supported by a **national individual consultant** who will:

- Collect and analyse relevant information for development of a working definition of social work, including analysis of statistical data, trends and information on the number and kind of vulnerable groups in Moldova;
- Conduct legal and policy analysis of social work functions based on the agreed definition of and needs for social work;
- Provide support to the international consultant and national research institution during the development of research methodology, field work and data analysis;
- Provide feedback to the international consultant on the assessment report and recommendations.

And a **national research institution** who will:

- Develop the research methodology and tools;
- Conduct the field work on social work practice assessment;
- Analyse the data for submission to international consultant;
- Provides feedback to the international consultant on the assessment report and recommendations.

The present **national individual** consultancy is aimed at supporting UNICEF in providing technical assistance for the implementation of a study on human resource and training needs (legal and practice review) regarding social work in the Republic of Moldova.

2. Objectives of the consultancy:

The objectives of this consultancy are:

- Collect and analyse relevant information for development of a working definition of social work, including analysis of statistical data, trends and information on the number and kind of vulnerable groups in Moldova;
- Conduct legal and policy analysis of social work functions based on the agreed definition of and needs for social work;
- Provide support to the international consultant and national research institution during the development of research methodology, field work and data analysis;

- Provide feedback to the international consultant on the assessment report and recommendations.

3. Details of how the work should be delivered

It is estimated that the work will be conducted over a period of 8 months, beginning in September 2014

To achieve the above-mentioned objectives, the researcher will:

- Work closely with UNICEF, the Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, academic institutions, national consultants and other relevant experts;
- Analyse existing national statistics and elaborate trends of people in needs/area of social assistance;
- Support an international consultant to perform a desk review of the existing law and policies related to social work, including relevant research;
- Support local research company in study design, methodology, data analysis and reporting;
- Provide feedback to the international consultant on the assessment report and recommendations.
- Examine the adequacy of and the need for any changes in current laws, policies and practices relevant to social work based on the human resource and training needs assessment.

4. Delivery dates (based on the work plan):

| Nr. | Activity | Deliverables | Tentative deadlines* |
|-----|---|---|--------------------------------|
| 1. | Guided by the international expert, collect and analyse all relevant information for the development a working definition of social work (5 days) | 1. Report on (potential) social work clients in Moldova submitted to UNICEF | Within 15 days from start date |
| 2. | Conduct a desk review of primary and secondary legislation and policies related to social work (5 days) | 2. Desk review of primary and secondary legislation and policies related to social work submitted | 20 days from start date |
| 3. | Provide input into research methodology, data collection instruments developed by national research company (2 days) | 3. Written and oral input provided to data collection instruments | Within 45 days |
| 4. | Provide technical clarifications and feedback as a national social work expert to the national institution during field work (2 days) | 4. Timely and adequate feedback and clarifications provided during field work | Within 3 months |

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| 5. | <p>a. Provide feedback and comments to draft assessment report of national institution (2 days)</p> <p>b. Provide feedback and comments to international consultant on draft recommendations for strengthening of social work in Moldova (1 days)</p> | <p>5. Written and oral feedback provided to draft assessment report</p> <p>6. Written and oral feedback provided to draft recommendations</p> | <p>Within 4 months</p> <p>Within 5 months</p> |
| 6. | <p>Provide feedback to the international consultant on final research report and summary that will include the overall analysis of the international definition of social work, working definition for Moldova, legal desk review and trends on the number and kind of vulnerable groups in Moldova, assessment results and clear recommendations in English (2 days)</p> | <p>7. Written and oral input provided to final report and summary in English.</p> | <p>Within 7 months</p> |
| 7. | <p>Review Romanian translation of final report for accuracy (2 days)</p> | <p>8. Final translation submitted</p> | <p>Within 8 months</p> |

* Exact deadlines will be mutually agreed upon contract signature.

5. Performance indicators for evaluation of results:

The performance of work will be evaluated based on the following indicators:

- Completion of tasks specified in ToR;
- Compliance with the established deadlines for submission of deliverables;
- Quality of work;
- Demonstration of high standards of work with UNICEF and with counterparts.

6. Qualifications and experience:

- Advanced university degree in Social Sciences, preferably in Social Work or related field; PhD in social work will be a strong asset.
- At least 5 years of progressive experience related to social work.
- Proven experience in research.
- Familiarity with relevant national standards, guidelines and tools related to social work and child protection.
- Excellent communication, presentation, teamwork and cooperation skills; ability to listen and express opinions sensitively; high work ethics.
- Ability to multi-task and produce quality outputs on short deadlines.
- Excellent command of Romanian language, both oral and written, including report-writing skills.
- Good working knowledge of English.
- Working knowledge of Russian will be an asset.
- Previous similar work experience with international organizations and/or government programmes in relevant areas will be an asset.

7. Financial proposal

The financial proposal shall specify the daily fee and the total lump sum amount. Payments shall be based upon outputs, i.e. upon delivery of the services specified in the TOR.

8. Evaluation criteria for selection

The candidate is expected to reflect in his/her application the qualifications/ knowledge/ experience related to the qualifications and tasks above, with a brief suggested methodology for the tasks. Evaluation will be performed through a desk review of applications, and if necessary, may be supplemented by an interview. The selection will be based on the principle of best value for money among the technically qualified candidates.